July 21, 2023

The Honorable Jennifer Granholm
U.S. Department of Energy
1000 Independence Avenue SW,
Washington, DC

The Honorable Lloyd J. Austin III
U.S. Department of Defense
1300 Defense Pentagon
Washington, DC

The Honorable Deb Haaland
U.S. Department of the Interior
1849 C Street NW,
Washington, DC

Dear Secretaries Granholm, Austin, and Haaland,

We are writing to bring to your attention a matter of utmost importance: the need to significantly boost domestic critical mineral production to support the growing demand in the semiconductor industry.

The semiconductor industry plays an indispensable role in our nation's economy, powering a wide range of essential sectors. However, the ongoing global shortage of semiconductors, the United States' reliance on the importation of materials from adversarial countries, and the recent ban against Micron by Chinese cyberspace regulators, only further demonstrates the need to maintain U.S. competitiveness in semiconductor production by reinforcing our domestic critical mineral supply chain.

Many critical minerals, such as gallium, germanium, tantalum, and certain rare earth elements, are essential to producing chips and are plentiful here at home. Gallium has deposits situated in the United States with over 46,000 metric tons of materials – yet over 53% of the gallium our country uses is imported from China. In 2022 alone, gallium metal imports from China increased by an estimated 34% according to the United States Geological Survey's Mineral Commodity Summaries of 2023.

Congress recently provided the Department of Energy and the Department of the Interior with updated direction and dedicated funding for their critical minerals and microelectronics R&D activities in bipartisan laws like the Energy Act of 2020 and the CHIPS and Science Act. Given the urgency of this matter, we request your agency prioritize the full implementation of these laws.

By working together to strengthen these types of programs, we can help identify the domestic critical mineral deposits that are essential for the semiconductor industry, gather accurate and up-to-date information on these reserves, develop advanced methods for domestic processing, and create an actionable plan with the objective of boosting domestic supply of these materials rapidly and sustainably. Such actions could include providing Defense Production Act Title III grants for domestic projects, leading to increased production of upstream supplies for semiconductor manufacturing, or providing engineering support for quality and yield of new and improved facilities.

We look forward to your prompt attention to this matter and would greatly appreciate being kept informed of any progress made. The need to address the critical mineral shortage, specifically for chip production, is paramount to our economic growth and national security. Together, we can ensure a robust and secure process for the mining and extraction of domestic materials for the semiconductor industry, thereby safeguarding the future prosperity of this industry that is chief to our position as a global leader on the international stage.

BRANDON WILLIAMS
Member of Congress

DOUG LAMBORN
Member of Congress

JACK BERGMAN
Member of Congress

ASHLEY HINSON
Member of Congress

DOUG LaMALFA
Member of Congress

MIKE LAWLER
Member of Congress

BLAINE LUETKEMEYER
Member of Congress

EARL L. "BUDDY" CARTER
Member of Congress

DAN NEWHOUSE
Member of Congress

NATHANIEL MORAN
Member of Congress